


Follow the Money: A Mechanism for Open Government System and Corruption Reduction in Gambia

By: Marr Nyang

When corruption is ignored, perpetrators get richer, leaving hundreds of thousands of people hungry, ill, and insecure. This occurs when national budget and community development funds are allocated for a specific project, but only a portion is used (if ever) and the rest ends up being embezzled by corrupt leaders. How do we make sure project funds are being used as designed? We need to Follow The Money! It doesn't necessarily mean the physical cash, but to make sure allocated funds are being used judiciously, so communities will benefit from the development that these projects were meant for.

According to the [2016 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index](#), Gambia ranks 145 out of 176 countries, with a score of 26 out of 100. In an effort to make changes and cut back on corruption and mismanagement of public funds, we launched [Follow the Money Gambia](#). It uses [Connected Development's \(CODE\) Follow the Model](#) to serve as a watchdog on the government, promote open government, and reduce corruption through the empowerment of communities. When leaders are aware of the existence of organizations such as Follow The Money, they tend to rule with trust and honesty in order not to be named, shamed, or jailed.

Marr Nyang with the children of Basse 
Mansajang (a marginalized community).
Follow The Money making ground
investigation before approaching the
government to make an urgent intervention.

Follow The Money Gambia also works towards community development. When we track funds meant for community development projects and there is no sign of the project being implemented soon, we immediately bring it to the attention of the government for them to take action. If the government shows no positive sign, we make it a headline on social media to hold them accountable. We need to be the voice of our people and that is exactly what Follow The Money Gambia will be doing.

If we ignore how our country is governed and lack interest in national matters, we empower corrupt leaders who are the enemies of national development to thrive.

Follow The Money investigates and educates and most of all, we amplify the voices of the marginalized communities. We unite people, help to develop their communities, hold leaders accountable, and promote open governing systems and most importantly, we bring government to the people through town hall meetings with the community and the government agencies that are supposed to implement the project.

Corruption leads to lack of proper justice, lack of development, poor health and hygiene thus we all become vulnerable and scapegoats of the wrongdoings of our leaders. In order for Africa to develop, youth organizations MUST work towards corruption reduction – holding our leaders accountable and

promoting transparent administrative system like what Follow The Money Gambia is doing.

We all have to come together, be proactive citizens of The Gambia and leverage on the model of [Follow the Money Nigeria](#) to bring development to the country.

Marr Nyang is founder of [#GambiaParticipates](#), a project aimed at promoting voter education and civic engagement by giving access to relevant election related information.
